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*Published in:*  
Red Feather Journal

Published: 02/11/2020

*Document Version*  
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication on the UWS Academic Portal](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*

James, K. (2020). In Packer's shadow: children-controlled cricket matches of the early-1980s (a Western Australian example). *Red Feather Journal*, 11(1), 17-37.

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# **In Packer's Shadow: Children-controlled cricket matches of the early-1980s (a Western Australian example)**

**by Kieran James**

## **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

Children's rights remains an important topic in the modern day. It was distressing to see children's rights being dismissed as soon as the Covid-19 lockdown was put into place by the British and Scottish governments in March 2020. Lip-service was paid to children's rights for several decades' right up until a perceived crisis occurred and then they were immediately forgotten in the name of a "public health" "pandemic." Children were not asked their opinions on the lockdown or issues such as whether schools should be closed and exams cancelled. It was not even part of the discourse of the possible. In this new environment, a 16- or 17-year-old had as much influence and voice as a 5-year-old, i.e. absolutely zero. In Scotland, where I live today, the adults abandoned the town-centers as soon as lockdown hit. Then an unexpected new sight emerged of groups of teenagers riding around the streets on bicycles – if the adults didn't want the town-centers then the children would take them! I was delighted to see this happen - it was their subversive protest against their own alienation.

In this article I re-examine the issue of children's control of children's sport versus adult-control of children's sport through a detailed study of some unique and interesting primary data from Perth, Australia, 1979-81. This primary data, derived from my own notes and documents that I wrote at the time, is a summary of the lead-up to and the first-innings of the first cricket match in a three-match series, organized by Stanley Erskine (name changed) and me, the captains of two 11-player teams of 11-year-olds. The two teams were known as "Jamieson's team" (name changed) and "Erskine's team" (name changed). (Note that the names of all match participants have been changed in order to preserve their privacy.) The first three-match series was held during the summer holidays of 1979/80, when the players had just completed Year 6 of primary (elementary)-school and the second three-match series, involving the same two teams and mostly the same players, was conducted during the school holidays of 1980/81. By this time, the players had completed Year 7 of primary-school and were about to move on to high-school. On entering high-school, the players were largely split up, across various government and private (religious) schools, and the games ceased. In a surprising coincidence, my team won the first match of both series, but Erskine's team went on to win the last two matches of both series.

I situate my analysis within the context of children's rights and children's agency. One major impetus for our matches was the frustration and disappointment my best friend, Alexander "Alex" Raine, and I felt because we perceived that our school-teachers did not accurately measure our cricketing skills and abilities. We were both selected in our school's third-best cricket team out of four (the "C-team") to play a

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<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank the editor and reviewers at *Red Feather Journal* for their thoughtful and helpful comments.

series of matches against rival schools and we felt that our abilities had not been fully recognized. We also resented being placed in a schoolyard hierarchy or pecking-order over which we had no control. As a result, we decided to organize our own matches and run them in a serious and professional way, mimicking adult professional cricket to the greatest extent possible, for example, wearing white cricketing-clothes, adhering to rules and sportsmanship, keeping detailed scores.

For matches organized by and for children, with adult involvement only on the periphery as umpires and groundsmen, our cricket matches were well-organized and planned. They involved two teams of 11 players each; umpires were taken from the ranks of older brothers and parents; and Mr. Hancock, the beloved groundsman at Mount Pleasant Primary School, prepared a special turf pitch for the first game of the first series. Two detailed sets of planned field placings in graphical form for my team were among the documents from the time, showing fielding positions and fielder names for fast and spin bowling (one set of field placements for each bowler type). These field placement graphs show the extent of planning which went into these games and the dedication and sense of ownership which the games engendered. In the words of Edward Deci and Richard Ryan's (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b, 2002) Self-Determination Theory (SDT) the games were "autonomy-enhancing" for us children. Organizing my team to compete against "Erskine's team" saw personal and team pride at stake and the organization of these games was a vital opportunity to develop and practice leadership and captaincy skills. We "owned" these teams in a way we could never claim or experience with the club or school teams which operated in the local district at the same time. As Karl Marx (n.d./1844, 2008/1867) would have said, we worked hard to overcome our own alienation by taking control of the means of production and dismissing adult control, with adults coming in only to help at the margins, and only at our request. The two teams coalesced around existing friendship cliques (without duplicating them exactly), which magnified cohesion and team-spirit.

I argue that our games were enjoyable and empowering in a way that adult-controlled children's sport rarely manages to be, even today. The main problem with adult-controlled sport is that the agendas, wishes, and desires of the parents are ranked as more important than those of the children (Byrne, 1993, p. 45; Connell, 1993, p. 89; Gilroy, 1993, pp. 23-25; Gould, 1996; Hardy, 1986, p. 46; Lee, 1993, pp. 28, 33, 34, 37; Martens, 1996; Rowland, 1997; Smoll, 2001), at least in the subconscious minds of those involved. The lingering suspicion that coaches' children are treated more favorably than other team members is always hard to dispel. Lastly, I argue that the World Series Cricket (WSC) experiment, a rival cricketing infrastructure to official cricket, set in motion by businessman Kerry Packer (which coincidentally also ran for two complete Australian summers) (Murray, 1998, p. 51), had opened our young minds to consider the possibilities for the self-organization of games. Cricket fans saw the first WSC game, held at VFL Park on December 2nd-4th, 1977 between Australia and the West Indies attract a crowd of only one or two thousand people.<sup>2</sup> Despite this initial setback, WSC persevered, and, by the second

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<sup>2</sup> VFL Park (Victorian Football League) was a stadium in the Melbourne outer-eastern suburb of Mulgrave that mainly hosted Australian Rules football games. The location is significant because most professional cricket matches would have been traditionally played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). Packer had been barred from using the MCG. That the first WSC match was played at VFL Park illustrates how Packer's ambitious initiative started small and in a humble manner.

season, the games were drawing huge crowds and thrilling youngsters with the brightly-colored uniforms, limited-overs night-cricket, and the class batsmen and ferocious bowlers of the home-nation and its Caribbean opponent. (WSC's third team, the World XI, featured a mix of Englishmen, Pakistanis, and South Africans.) As Australian journalist Gideon Haigh (1993, p. 308) wrote, "[c]ricket was altered ... in ways that would not have occurred under its previous institutional structures." WSC was a lesson for young people about what was possible; and the importance of starting small and adhering to one's original vision. It taught us, as well as or better than any classroom lesson, not to be afraid of risks or even of failure.

## **An Introduction to Cricket**

In the 1970s, cricket was, without a doubt, Australia's major summer sport. It holds this position until the present day, although it is undergoing challenges from soccer, basketball, and extreme sports. In fact, soccer switched its national-league season to summer in 1989/90 to avoid competition with Australian Rules football and rugby-league.<sup>3</sup> Crucial to Australian cricket are the "Ashes Test" matches played between Australia and England. They pit the young Antipodal country against its former colonial ruler so that Australia's victories represent an important source of national pride. In the 1974/75 summer, Australia's fast bowlers, Dennis Lillee and Jeff Thomson, put England's batsmen into moral and physical retreat. The sheer speed of the delivery of the ball by Lillee and Thomson exposed the bodies of the Englishmen to physical danger and Australia convincingly won the five-match series 4-1. Australians rejoiced and laughed as England brought back 41-year-old Colin Cowdrey as a replacement batsman in a desperate attempt to resist the tide and offer leadership. These 1974/75 matches had, and still have, symbolic meaning, beyond sport, given England's harsh treatment of prisoners in Australia during the convict-era.<sup>4, 5</sup>

Cricket is played by two teams of 11 players each. The fielding team takes positions in the field in order to stop and catch the ball. Every player on the batting team gets a shot at bat with the best batsmen usually placed higher up in the "batting order." Two batsmen<sup>6</sup> are on the field at any one time, one at one end, facing balls bowled (i.e., pitched) by the bowler, and the other waiting at the bowler's end, 22 yards away, at the other end of the pitch. At either end of the pitch is a "wicket" consisting of a set

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<sup>3</sup> Australian Rules football and rugby-league are typically played between autumn, throughout winter and ending with a Grand Final match in early spring.

<sup>4</sup> All of Australia's modern state capital cities, except for Perth and Adelaide, began as penal settlements established by Great Britain. The convicts mostly hailed from Great Britain, which back then included what is now the Republic of Ireland. White settlement in Perth was begun by free settlers in 1829 (indigenous history in the area dates back another 40,000 years) but Perth did receive convict prisoners from 1850-68.

<sup>5</sup> The convict era is not the only source of grievance, but, throughout the period before Federation (in 1901), Anglo-Australians can point to multiple historical moments in which the Crown ruled with a repressive iron fist, best represented by the legend of the outlaw Ned Kelly who is an emblem of defiance against British rule. Even more galvanizing is the incident at Gallipoli, a household name in Australia that refers to the failed campaign by the British to invade Turkey in 1915 during World War One. Australian federation was only 15 years old when over 25 thousand Australian troops (or diggers) died during the failed campaign and the event exists today as a decisive moment in history when Australians began cutting cultural ties with Britain. Of course, none of this even takes into consideration Australia's increasing sensitivity to the British doctrine of *Terra Nullius* that declared the land void of any indigenous occupants and led to the active decimation of Aboriginal indigenous populations across the continent, destroying their culture and heritage.

<sup>6</sup> A gender-neutral term here would be preferred. However, I avoid use of the term "batter" as it is associated with baseball and not used at all within Australian cricketering culture.

of three vertical “stumps” or wooden sticks about 28 inches long with a spike at one end that is driven into the ground. The stumps are arranged side-by-side three inches apart in a line to create the wicket and atop each stump is a groove upon which sits a pair of short wooden sticks called “bails.” If one or both of the bails fall, it indicates that the wicket has been hit and the umpire must make a ruling.

The bowler bowls from 22 yards with a round-arm action similar to a pitch in baseball except there is a run-up (imagine a plane taking off) and the bowling arm must be straight at the point of delivery. The batsman aims to defend his or her wicket by hitting the ball away. Once the batsman hits the ball, “runs” are scored by the two batsmen alternating places by running the full 22 yards each to the opposite wicket. If the ball hits the boundary (the perimeter of the field) it scores the batsman and his/her team four runs. If it goes over the boundary without bouncing it is worth six runs. The batsman is “out” or “dismissed” if his or her wicket “falls” (a reference to the bails balanced atop the stumps falling off) and he or she is replaced by the next batsman in the line-up. The most usual ways for this to happen are: “bowled” (the ball hits the wooden stumps); “caught” (an opposing player catches it before it hits the ground, just like in baseball); “run out” (a fielder hits the stumps with the ball before a batsman reaches the safe end of the pitch he/she is running towards); and “leg before wicket” or “L.B.W.” (This form of dismissal, often controversial in practice, occurs when the ball hits the batsman’s legs and it is adjudged by the umpire that it would otherwise have hit the stumps.) The “inning” is completed when 10 out of the 11 batsmen on one team have been dismissed. There are two innings per team, with innings usually alternating. The captain who wins the toss of the coin gets to choose whether to bat or to bowl first. The team with the most runs after the completion of two innings each is declared the winner. After a batting team hits the winning runs, the game is over, even if there are batsmen in the line-up that are yet to have a second turn at bat. Other interesting terminology includes a “duck,” indicating that a player has been dismissed without scoring a run, and a “golden duck,” when a batsman is unfortunate enough to be dismissed by the first ball faced.

### **Australian Culture in the 1970s and 1980s**

It would be fair to say that, broadly speaking, Australia remained a socially conservative and patriotic outpost of the British Empire right up through the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>7</sup> Perth is one of the most geographically isolated major cities in the world and, back in the late-1970s, it remained more socially conservative and insulated than did the larger cities on the east coast, i.e., Melbourne and Sydney. Australia had 23 years of a conservative Liberal/National coalition government from 1949-72, which was a restraining force in terms of progressive social change. The then Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies (1949-66) was a devoted monarchist and a committed Anglophile. Cricket was the most popular summer sport and the most important cricket matches were the “Ashes Test” series played regularly between Australia and England.

From 1972-75, the Whitlam Labor Government, led by the late Gough Whitlam, launched an ambitious program of radical social change, including the introduction of free tertiary-education, free healthcare (“Medicare”), a move towards land-rights for indigenous people, and the cancellation of the White Australia Policy (1901-73), which had put an almost total ban on non-white immigration. In my suburban Perth

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<sup>7</sup> Two excellent Australian sports sociology texts which cover this period are Adair and Vamplew (1997) and Lawrence and Rowe (1986).

of the late-1970s, our primary-school was nearly exclusively white, as the end of the White Australia Policy failed to produce immediate visible effects on the ground for a number of years.<sup>8</sup> Unfortunately, for progressives, there was a backlash against the pace of reforms, and the Whitlam Government also found itself in severe financial trouble.

On November 11th, 1975, a constitutional crisis occurred when the Governor-General (the Queen's representative in Australia), Sir John Kerr, intervened to remove the Whitlam Government from office and Malcolm Fraser's Liberals agreed to take power. They subsequently won the next Federal election. Then, and today, debate rages as to whether the "coup" was legal under Australian law. This "coup" set back progressive expectations and hopes, and Australia remained a socially and politically conservative nation. The Hawke Labor Government won power in 1983 on the premise that only it could offer the Accord, a working partnership between trade-unions and government, which would usher in a period of wage-restraint. The charismatic Prime Minister, Robert "Bob" Hawke, tamed left-wing radicalism and saw unions forced to reinvent themselves as law-abiding, compassionate NGOs rather than the combative firebrands which they once had been. One of Hawke's major "successes" was when he forced deregistration and merger upon the communist-controlled Builders' Labourers' Federation (BLF), and the building unions never really recovered.<sup>9</sup>

Our middle-class suburban primary-school was a prime example of social conservatism in a society unified by its beliefs in the monarchy, law-and-order, and traditional values. Boys and girls were strictly separated in practice on the sporting-field and the essentialist ideology of binary genders went unquestioned. Girls were ushered into the "girls' sports" of netball in winter and softball in summer, supervised and umpired by female teachers. In contrast, boys were shepherded into the "manly" "boys' sports" of cricket in summer and Australian Rules football in winter, and male teachers officiated in and exerted strict control over these games. It was a radical event, then, when Neil Gibson and I formed an official school soccer-team, even with school backing. It was an official school team, and had a female teacher, Miss Laurie, who was invited to coach at our request. But the team only played two or three games (against other schools) and was largely ignored by everybody other than the players.

As mentioned, although it was hardly a left-wing initiative, Kerry Packer's WSC cricket infrastructure inspired us, and, at least subconsciously, I believe showed us that setting up a rival organization was possible and practicable. The controller of the sport, the Australian Cricket Board (ACB), was, in the pre-WSC era, an extremely conservative and antiquated institution on a par with the English cricket body of the time. Sir Donald Bradman, an aging cricket legend, ruled the ACB with an iron-fist during his tenure as principal from 1969-72 and was later a sworn opponent of WSC. The ACB was content to run the game exactly as it had been run since the Great War. It was feudal in nature and the players, although professionals, had been excluded from earning a reasonable share of the new money which had been flooding into the game. They were then mostly keen to abandon the ACB in 1977.

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<sup>8</sup> For a brief introduction to the concept of multiculturalism and its application in Australia since the early-1970s, see Heywood (2014, pp. 191-193).

<sup>9</sup> For more on the BLF, see Bramble (2008) and James and Leung (2017).

## Existing Literature on Children and Sport

Murray Smith (1975, pp. ix-x) cited four problematic beliefs about adult-controlled children's sport. The beliefs persist even today and at least the first three, if not all four, must be seriously challenged. The four beliefs are as follows: (1) "children play sports to entertain adults [rather than themselves]"; (2) "games and sports for kids must be organized and controlled by adults if they are to be of real value"; (3) "kids are miniature adults" (a statement directly opposed by Byrne, 1993, p. 45); and (4) "the real value in sport lies in learning to be a winner." To me, the first two points, in particular, effectively deny children autonomy and empowerment by saying that whatever children might do, outside of adult-control, has very low value and little meaning. As this study will show, this position is misguided as children can have autonomy and enjoyment in sport outside of adult control.

Bailey, Cope, and Pearce (2013, p. 56) summarized the findings of past research on children's motivations to play sport as: (1) perception of competence; (2) fun and enjoyment; (3) parents; (4) learning new skills; and (5) friends and peers. These motivations have been long-established and well-documented. However, research on the inter-connections between these variables is, arguably, still at the exploratory stage. Furthermore, it should be noted that there is an undercurrent in some studies which implies that coaches should downplay the emphasis on winning (e.g. Brady, 2004, p. 39; Martens, 1996; Smoll & Smith, 1981), and this appears to be backed up by two leading theories.

The two main theories used to explain children's sport participation are: Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) (Duda, 2001; Duda & Hall, 2001) and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b, 2002).

AGT maintains that children's motivations are situated along a task- and ego-orientated continuum (Nicholls, 1984). Those students who are primarily task-orientated are motivated by personal improvement through learning new skills. By contrast, those who are ego-orientated are motivated mostly by demonstrating superiority through winning and gaining accolades. Duda and Whitehead (1998) put forward the view that there are high task- and ego-orientated individuals as well as low task- and ego-orientated people. There are also some people with high task-orientation but with low ego-orientation, and vice-versa.

According to SDT, stated reasons for playing sport are called motivational regulations (Deci & Ryan, 2000). At one end of the spectrum is intrinsic motivation, which is playing for the love of the sport (Hollembeak & Amorose, 2005, p. 20; Vallerand & Losier, 1999, p. 153). At the other end is amotivation, which refers to a lack of motivation to play the sport and hence an unwillingness to take part (Hollembeak & Amorose, 2005, p. 20; Quested & Duda, 2011; Vallerand & Losier, 1999, p. 153). Extrinsic motivation lies on the spectrum between these two end-points (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Hollembeak & Amorose, 2005, p. 20; Vallerand & Losier, 1999, p. 153). Extrinsic motivation further divides into two types - self-determined and non-self-determined (Mallett, 2005). Within self-determined-regulation are integrated and identified regulation (Spray, Wang, Biddle, & Chatzisarantis, 2006, p. 44). Identified regulation is where the child has internalized what participation in the sport means to her or him, and chooses to participate (Deci & Ryan, 2000). For Ryan and Deci (2000b, p. 73), integrated regulation, which is a more abstract concept,

reflects behaviors “fully assimilated to the self, which means they have been evaluated and brought into congruence with one’s other values and needs.” Non-self-determined regulation also breaks down into two elements - introjected and external regulations. Introjected regulations are when children participate due to feelings of guilt (due to pressure from parents, for example) (Bailey, Cope, & Pearce, 2013, p. 63). External regulation is where children are motivated by financial rewards, media attention, and/or winning (*ibid.*, p. 63). In summary, there are four types of extrinsic motivation: external, introjected, identified, and integrated.

Deci and Ryan (2000) argue that, for children to remain motivated to participate in sport, their basic psychological needs, divided up into three components – competence, autonomy, and relatedness - must be met (Hollembek & Amorose, 2005, p. 21; Vallerand & Losier, 1999, p. 144). The autonomy component is particularly relevant and interesting given the focus of this article. Hollembek and Amorose (2005, p. 21) point out that “[t]he need for autonomy represents the need to perceive [one’s] behaviors ... as freely chosen”.

According to Martin Lee (1993), we can divide values within a sporting context into four categories as follows: attainment values; social values; competence values; and moral values. Attainment values are those which we have for ourselves and which do not involve other people or society, e.g., we might aim for social recognition or self-respect through our sporting attainments. Lee argues that striving to win or to achieve a certain level of performance are behavioral manifestations of the attainment value in action. Social values are goals that we might have for society or for our sporting club. They might include justice (being fair), freedom (allowing people to experience control), and equal opportunities.

Lee (1993) claims that competence values revolve around how important we think it is to demonstrate our mastery of aspects of a sport in front of others. Lee (1993, p. 30) writes that competence values in sport might be represented by setting high goals, being dedicated, and being skillful. Placing too much emphasis on competence values might lead to an aggressive, win-at-all-costs ambience where failure is laughed at and less-skilled players are either mocked or excluded (Evans & Roberts, 1987; Roberts & Treasure, 1993, p. 5).

Moral values, being interpersonal and instrumental, relate to how we behave in situations involving others - this would include behaviors such as accepting and forgiving others plus all of the behaviors traditionally placed under the heading of “sportsmanship.”

Another important concept is Robert Putnam’s (2000, 2007) idea of bonding and bridging social capital. Putnam argued that sport is an effective way to create both types of social capital. Social capital refers to “connections among individuals – social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). In regards the bonding form, Craig (2016, p. 162) argues that it refers to “ways that social capital and its associated networks and social practices help produce and reproduce distinct homogenous groups of people.” Bonding capital means strengthening bonds of trust between similar people, whereas bridging capital refers to building trust across different sets of people. In our cricketing community, bonding capital might refer to relations between team-mates whereas bridging capital might refer to relations between members of the two opposing teams. In terms of bridging capital, Craig (2016, p. 164), drawing upon Putnam (1993, 2007), sees voluntary organizations as being able to “improve the flow of information about the trustworthiness of individuals.” Furthermore,



successful past collaborations are remembered and act as a “template for future collaboration[s]” (Putnam, 1993, pp. 173-174).

## Research Approach

This study involves reproduction of a match summary and scoresheet of children-controlled end-of-year cricket matches played in Perth, Australia between two teams of 11-12-year-olds in 1979-81. I commenced the study after finding the original exercise book containing the full match scores in a cupboard in my late grandparents’ home in July 2019. Because of the distance of time, and the fact that I no longer live or work in Australia, there was some distance between myself now and the document. As a result, I was able to analyse it from a certain distance while, at the same time, the scoresheets were backed up by personal memories. I contacted two ex-players, via alumni Facebook networks, and asked them questions about the matches which both ex-players recalled fondly. Pseudonyms are used here for every player and umpire in order to preserve their privacy.

In Results Parts C-D and Discussion, I attempt to answer the research question by reflecting on how the evidence indicates that the two captains, in particular, fostered empowerment and autonomy through decision-making in the areas of recruitment and team-management. I also reflect upon how we attempted to circumvent or overcome the established hierarchies of (1) adult>child and (2) skilled child>unskilled child, which school and adult-controlled sport had reified and were utilizing as standard tools of grading, discipline, status-confirmation, and marginalization (Foucault, 1990/1980, 1995/1977).

The exercise book reveals a suburban, white, monocultural, middle-class Australia, which has, to a large extent, disappeared today. The districts of Mount Pleasant and Booragoon are now multicultural rather than Anglo-Australian-dominant. Using Census data from the 1981 Census, children aged 0-14 born in Australia or a traditional Anglo source-country (U.K., Ireland or New Zealand) made up 95.91% (164,139/171,145) of all Western Australian children and the percentage of all people born in Australia or an Anglo source-country was 86.94% (559,092/643,108). The respective figures at the 2016 Census were 84.74% (266,900/314,956) (for children aged 5-14) and 73.59% (1,820,921/2,474,410) for all people. The catchment area for our primary-school (Mount Pleasant and Booragoon) was more multicultural than the state as a whole, with Mount Pleasant being 78.33% for 5-14s (69.99% overall) and Booragoon being 81.77% (69.18% overall). In the Ancestry section of the 2016 Census data, Mount Pleasant had 18.04% of people claiming a non-European ethnic identity whilst the figure for Booragoon was 18.42% (and 11.18% for Western Australia as a whole). In Mount Pleasant, the most common non-European ancestries were Chinese (769 persons) (11.51%) and Indian (233) (3.49%).<sup>10</sup> The physical architecture of Mount Pleasant has changed too, with countless new mansions having been built to replace the original 1960s houses.

My written summary, from 1979-80, reveals some extra interesting details, such as students being escorted off school grounds to attend a compulsory Christmas church service in December 1979. With growing secularization across society, and a new multicultural ethos, such initiatives no longer happen at our state-schools. As Delaney and Madigan (2015, p. 355) write about the North American context: “Blame ‘political correctness’ or a real attempt to avoid being exclusionary, but governments

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<sup>10</sup> In this Census more than one ancestral identity could be chosen, so the percentages may be overstated.

... at all levels, local, state and federal, consciously attempt to avoid making public displays of religious imagery.” By contrast, others might claim that the reluctance of secular governments to participate actively in religion is less a matter of political correctness than an attempt to maintain a clear distinction between religion and politics (i.e., the separation of church and state).

## **Results Part A: The Lead-up to the First Match (written 1979-80 by the Author)**

The following two sections directly reproduce my own writing about the planning for, and first innings, of the first cricket match held on Thursday, December 20th, 1979. I believe it is interesting to read these two sections, written by me in 1979-80, side-by-side with the third and fourth Results sections, written by me in 2019-20. The latter sections were not easy to write as it was a difficult intellectual and practical exercise to put myself back into the mind and heart of an 11-year-old child then living in a very different society and culture to today. It was a challenge to try to relive and reimagine my own mentality and thinking back then. Some subjectivity is involved, definitely, but I have tried to not go beyond what I clearly remember and what was commonly understood and perceived at the time by myself and others. It was made easier, though, by me having never written or thought much about these games between 1981 and 2019, so the events remained “frozen,” in my memory, as it were, like a “time capsule” ready to be unsealed.

*About mid-November [1979], Trent Bradbury and I had the idea of a cricket match to be played in the holidays. Trent’s “no-good players” request was eventually banned and the “recruiting” began. I was to captain one side while Trent was to captain the other. Next day Trent handed over the reins to cricket enthusiast, Stanley Erskine. First we selected knock-up teams, with no good players, to go along with Trent’s rule. My side, at that stage, consisted of: Barker, Graburn, Ladywell, Edensor, Boswell and myself. [They were not] exactly champions [but they] were all enthusiastic.*

*Stanley soon realized that the “no-good players” rule was inconvenient and the rule was banned. We were then allowed to choose any players in our grade and the real “recruiting” began. We both rushed to get the good players in on our side. Later that week the teams started shaping up. We purchased score-sheets and Dr. Haythornthwaite, Robert’s father, was available to umpire.*

*Norman Graburn was soon dropped to twelfth man, in my team, for all-rounder David Greenwood, who, previously, [had] refused to play.*

*Peter Renfrew, our opening bowler, moved to Stanley’s side, so a need for a good replacement was pressing. During play [i.e. play-time break] Paul, Samuel, and I decided on Ronald Patel. He attended our school up to Year 5 when he left for Christchurch [i.e. Christ Church Grammar School in Claremont]. I wrote him a letter asking if he could play and put it in his letter-box. Paul told me that Ronald was available. Stanley finally agreed arguing, firstly, that he came from another school. Peter Renfrew’s arrival to the other team saw Patrick Harrison drop to 12th man.*

*The next few weeks were uneventful. Later our class were going to a Christmas Church Service, when David Greenwood told me he couldn’t play. Simon Edensor forced his way back into our team. Raymond Southby, dropped out of their team, that last morning of school, the day before the game, and they thought as a*

replacement to use a boy known by Stanley from his church Anthony McGowan. Another last minute drop-out was our No. 3, Neil Boswell. I was worried about it, not knowing who to replace him with. During the last school assembly I thought of the answer.

A few days ago I had played at the park with team-mate Alexander "Alex" Raine, my neighbour Derek Leman, and a boy called Allan [real first-name]. Against them I made my highest-ever score of 61. Allan was a Year 7 from Port Hedland, down here for the Christmas period. He is one of the best players, of my age, I have ever seen.

The afternoon before the game, which, of course, was to be on the first day of the holidays, I walked to 40 Davenport Road, where Allan had said he was staying. A man answered the door and said Allan was at the W.A.C.A. ground in Perth watching the First Test but would be back by six-thirty. When he got back, the man said that Allan would phone me. I gave the man my number and walked home.

At about six-thirty-five Allan rang. He said he would be able to come! Unfortunately I had to go to the orthodontists at 4 on the afternoon of the game.

## **Results Part B: The First Innings of the Game, Thursday, December 20th, 1979**

The game was to start at nine although when I arrived, laden down with my Slazenger bat, etc., at five to nine, Jeffrey Randall, Stanley Erskine and many others had arrived. Stanley had put down deck-chairs in the "pavilion" near the pitch kindly made by school gardener Mr. Hancock. Anthony McGowan arrived with Graham Lever, another kid from another school. Our 12th. Man, Norman Graburn came along with Robert Haythornthwaite, Patrick Barker, Samuel Denton and Ronald Patel from our side. Adam Painter, Trent Bradbury, Morton Van Gelder and Innes Lockwood, who was not named in the 12, came from theirs. The time was a minute to nine and I was waiting for Allan. At nine o'clock he and Alex Raine were dropped off. The two 'keepers Paul Hadfield and Larry Thompson had not arrived. 9 players from our side and 8 from theirs had attended. The toss was performed by Trent Bradbury, Stanley's vice-captain and I. I called "Heads"! Tails it was! Trent decided to bat and we took the field. The umpire was Alastair Bennett, a university student.

Bradbury and Painter opened the batting. Randall was 'keeping with batting gloves on. Allan was at slip, I was at point, Samuel was at cover and so-on. Patel bowled the first ball to Trent. Denton bowled from the opposite end. I let Robert Haythornthwaite bowl in front of me. By the end of their short innings Patel had 2 wickets, Denton and Haythornthwaite 3. Allan took the last wicket with Stanley and Trent batting again.

Jeffrey Randall and Allan opened our batting with Peter Renfrew opening their bowling. Jeffrey was out for a small score as was Samuel Denton. I made 8 before being bowled by Painter. Ronald Patel made a great partnership with Allan. Ronald was out, followed by Alex Raine for a duck. Finally Allan played a ball on to his stumps and was out for over 30. He was applauded as he walked back to our seats. The tailenders [i.e. batsmen in the bottom section of a batting list] were soon out and Randall and Allan were called to bat again. [Note: Full scoresheets appear as Table 1.]

## **Results Part C (written 2019-20)**

As this section will indicate, all of the four value types specified by Martin Lee (1993) - attainment, social, competence, and moral - were important to us when we administered and played our end-of-year cricket matches - we wanted to attain mastery of the skills of cricket and we wanted to win. On the other hand, we wanted to play according to our own code and codes of ethics by keeping cordial relationships with everyone; playing the game according to the rules; monitoring the other team's recruitment; agreeing upon the choice of umpires; and, consistent with our social values, as the team captains, giving weaker players a chance to bat more often and to bowl. In the first match of the 1979/80 season, my team "followed on" to bat, although we outperformed Erskine's team by far in the first innings. (This means that our innings were second and third in the order, rather than the conventional second and fourth.) The reason was to give more people the chance to bat and bowl rather than just finish off the fourth and last innings as a run-chase for a small total with only two, three or four people getting the chance to bat. More generally, our attainment values centered on winning and skills mastery whereas our social values included active but fair recruitment of players plus awarding opportunities to people to bat higher up the batting order, to bowl, and (in certain cases) to act as wicket-keeper (i.e., the fielder directly behind the stumps who catches balls missed by the batsman). One reason, but not the only reason, we wanted to keep high ethical standards was because we knew that relationships with many of the players would continue on into the final year of elementary-school and, in certain cases, into high-school as well.

One example from the first match of the first series shows children's control of children's sport working effectively. As an earlier section indicates, Erskine's vice-captain, Bradbury, and I participated in the coin-toss before the first match of the 1979/80 season and I lost. Bradbury chose to bat and so my team took the field. The first opposition innings lasted 21 overs. (An "over" is a set of six balls bowled by the same bowler from one end.) In the first innings, I was scheduled to put myself on as second-change (fourth) bowler after the initial pace onslaught of Patel and Denton. I then bowed to Robert Haythornthwaite's pressure and put him on as second-change bowler, instead of me - he did remarkably well to finish with 3 wickets for 3 runs from his 2 overs. This example shows the captaincy and leadership skills that I had been developing and honing in this special environment free from adult-control. Haythornthwaite was not a "name" or well-regarded bowler at school, but he was enthusiastic, and he took the opposition by storm, finishing with excellent figures.

We can also observe me changing the batting order in the second innings of the first game (refer to Table 1, Panel C). I rewarded good performers in the first innings by raising them up in the batting order, most notably Denton (from sixth to fourth) and Patel (from fourth to third). Patel ended up scoring 20 runs in the second innings, out of a total of 83, which seems to vindicate my decision. The "no-name" player, Gillett, who had scored 5 not out, coming in as tenth (second-last) batsman, in the first innings, was elevated in the batting order to fifth place. I dropped myself down to eleventh and last place in the second innings. All of these changes were made to reward and make fuller use of strong performers and, by doing so, to magnify team-spirit, enthusiasm, and bonding social capital. Similarly, opposing captain Erskine's raising of McKenzie from eighth to fourth in his team's batting order was probably also designed to raise McKenzie's morale by giving him an earlier chance at bat.

I now reproduce an online Facebook conversation I had with the ex-player Arthur Gillett (name changed) on December 5th, 2019:

KJ: @Arthur Gillett - do you remember those end-of-year cricket matches, Erskine's team versus Jamieson's team; you were in my team, at end of year 6 and 7?

KJ: We recruited Ronald Patel that was a damn big event; he was going to Christchurch by then. Our pace attack was Patel and Denton.

AG: Yes @Kevin Jamieson. I remember the game at Mt. Pleasant well. I recall you had a batting helmet that I borrowed and Robert Haythornthwaite's father, Dr. Raymond (R.I.P.) umpired.

AG: Ronald Patel. Nice fella. Lived across the road from the school driveway.

KJ: Yes Dr. Haythornthwaite was umpire along with Alfred Patel, older brother of Ronald. Yes he did [live across the road from the school], nice guy, dangerous bowler.

AG: He and Samuel Denton were "lethal" back in their days.

KJ: Their team's pace attack was Renfrew and "The Fish" Henning, strong attack too.

AG: Seamus Henning. Remember him well. Don't recall his bowling ability though. Peter Renfrew was also very quick @Kevin Jamieson.

Sean Saunders (name changed) played the first two matches of the second-series for Erskine's team. He made the following comments in an online Facebook conversation on February 25th, 2020:

SS: Hey [Kevin]. That's hilarious [that you posted those old match scores online recently]! I remember that game. Ronald Patel bowled accurately and fast. I wonder where he is now. You were always a fantastic organizer of things.

My strategic and imaginative recruitment of R. Patel and Allan paid dividends with both players being outstanding success stories (see Table 1). Allan only ever played the first match of the first series and the two teams were a lot more even after his departure.

## **Results Part D - Racial Issues and Subcultural Capital**

The 1996 *Asians Can't Play Football* report, by Jas Bains and Raj Patel (Bains & Patel, 1996), put forward the view that aspiring Asian footballers in Britain (mostly of Pakistani and Indian descent) suffered the effects of being marginalized by their white coaches; and the lack of Asian footballers in the English and Scottish Premier Leagues today supports this assertion. In terms of racial and cultural issues, my team's Anglo-Indian fast bowler, R. Patel, was welcomed by the members of both teams and he was accepted - he was respected for his fearsome pace bowling and he was liked for his charming personality and peaceable gentle manner (which were an apparent contradiction to the approach he adopted with his fast bowling).<sup>11</sup> We were very familiar with the Pakistani and Indian teams in Test cricket.

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<sup>11</sup> Patel was the second son of a father from the Indian subcontinent and an Anglo-Australian mother.

We *did not want* modified-rules (contrary to the arguments for modified-rules put forward by Frank Brady, 2004, p. 39); and we kept scores. Keeping scores added meaning, integrity, and purpose to our endeavors. Regardless of who won, we kept cordial relationships (and actual cordial!) during and after games.<sup>12</sup> We wanted to record our individual and team performances, and we wanted to win, but it was not a case of “win at all costs” - relationships and ethics were important too. My good relationships with other players continued on into high-school. Once I borrowed a cricket ball from Seamus “The Fish” Henning as he had to leave early from a neighbourhood “park cricket” match at Layman Park. As instructed by Henning, I left the ball in the dead-center of his home driveway and he held me in high regard after this, often recounting the story to others at school and elsewhere. This suggests bridging social capital had been developed, meaning that past successful collaborations were remembered and served as a “template for future collaboration[s]” (Putnam, 1993, pp. 173-174). As Henning had been part of Erskine’s team in our matches, and not my team, it is correct to call this bridging and not bonding social capital.

Therefore, referring back to the four value types specified by Lee (1993), keeping fastidiously to the rules, in most instances, while, in other cases, varying them (by letting some players bat twice to make up and even out the numbers in the first match of the 1979/80 season), reveals our social values and our pragmatism. Conforming to rules represented both our attainment and competence values in action, since rules give meaning and integrity to achievements, and put them within a generally accepted and acceptable standard and context. Adhering to rules, of course, was also consistent with our moral values since sportsmanship in action means, at least, adhering not only to the letter but also to the spirit of the laws. Our sportsmanship can be seen in the collective applause given to the star performer, Allan, as he returned back to our makeshift pavilion with his score on 33 in the first-innings of the first match (see Results Part B and Table 1 Panel A).

There was an additional reason why we kept scores. Among boys in upper primary-school back then, subcultural capital was awarded based largely on sporting prowess and achievements (Brady, 2004, p. 38; Roberts & Treasure, 1993, p. 5). By keeping scores, the scorebook, supported by verbal anecdotes and collective memories, was a new and important arbiter and distributor of subcultural capital which, crucially, allowed individuals to keep or improve their places in the schoolyard hierarchy.

SDT’s concept of non-self-determined regulation breaks down into two elements - introjected and external regulations. Introjected regulations are when children participate due to feelings of guilt. External regulation is where children are motivated by financial rewards, media attention, and/or winning. Our cricket enthusiasts were intrinsically motivated but we also wanted to win. By contrast, financial rewards and media attention played no part in our world. There was more public recognition available playing adult-controlled club-sport where one’s name might appear in officially-sanctioned publications with the articles or winners’ lists having been compiled by adults. I doubt that any of our players was motivated to play by guilt - parents, if anything, were more likely to push their children into adult-

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<sup>12</sup> North Americans may not be familiar with the U.K./Australian/N.Z. product called “cordial,” which is a concentrated sugary liquid to which you add water to create an instant sweet fruit-flavoured beverage, much like Kool Aid, but in liquid form.

controlled club-cricket than our “unofficial” games. Our games probably “went under the radar,” as far as most parents were concerned, as they were played during school-holiday weekdays when most fathers and some mothers would have been at work. I doubt whether any of our players were pressured into competing by parents or by anybody else. Therefore, we were partly intrinsically motivated and partly externally regulated, but by winning rather than by financial rewards or media attention. Guilt, almost certainly, played no role at all.

## Discussion

Karl Spracklen (1996) utilized the concept of “imaginary communities” to describe the perspective of rugby-league fans in the north of England. Their game split-off as a professional, working-class off-shoot of the elite sport of rugby-union at the tail-end of the nineteenth-century. The community imagines itself to be under continual threat and it perceives itself to be marginalized and disrespected by southerners and by rugby-union fans. The community comes to be defined by its “parochial pride” (Spracklen, 2016, p. 152) and its “hegemonic masculinity” (*ibid.*, p. 152); as well as by its “northernness” (Spracklen, 1996, 2007; Spracklen & Spracklen, 2008; Spracklen, Timmins, & Long, 2010).

Our group of young cricketing enthusiasts at our primary-school created our own imaginary community which continued through two full summers and, in some respects, on into high-school as well. We were always planning and discussing matches at school. Whilst, during the winters, discussion on the topic stopped, we were still friends for the most part, and in winter we supported and played Australian Rules football. The main event associated with our community was the three-match series played during the summers of 1979/80 and 1980/81. We didn’t need adult clubs to validate our activities - we could run the games ourselves. As with the “invented tradition” (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983) or “myth” (Spracklen, 2016, p. 153) of rugby-league’s identity-defining break with rugby-union in 1895, our community’s self-identity was based on our audacity and foresight in organizing matches free from adult-control. We were a different source of power, an alternative power-base, for those students who preferred our type of games to the official versions; and we were also an elementary-school version of Packer’s WSC.

By having cricketing knowledge and putting our own and our parents’ money into cricketing-gear, we demonstrated and accrued subcultural capital and, by putting our privately-purchased goods to common use, we demonstrated our commitment to our imaginary community. As an earlier quote showed, Arthur Gillett still fondly remembers borrowing my cricket helmet in one of the games. At the same time, the owner of the cricketing-gear had the first right to use it, so the individual was not absorbed completely into the community (as in a pure communist system). Each owner’s knowledge and cricketing-gear demonstrated his commitment to the sport and dedication to a high standard of professionalism. As such, we were more than just a group of friends and we saw our games as more important than “park cricket,” which we continued to play. With “park cricket,” no-one cared about the results of the games after they had finished and no-one wore cricketing whites. “Park teams” could have from 2 to 11 players and “park games” were not planned in advance other than perhaps a brief phone call on the day before a game.

In terms of gender issues, as mentioned earlier, we were socialized into a socially- and politically-conservative culture which was hegemonic in our middle-class, suburban primary-school. Although the Whitlam Labor Government of 1972-75 was

socially progressive, an organized left-wing was strongest in the larger cities of Sydney and Melbourne than in remote Perth, which was still socially conservative. Gender was equated with sex and the genders treated as binaries. Even in high-school, in the 1980s, it was still seen as unusual, even “strange,” for our classmate, Penny Tanner, to choose to play women’s soccer and she was later good enough to play for the Western Australian women’s state team (TWG staff, 2017).

We did not approach any girls with offers to play and no girl ever approached us. Although we had begun to develop romantic interests in girls, in sporting terms, we had been successfully indoctrinated by the school-teachers into the ideology that a wall does, and should, divide, girls’ and boys’ sport and that neither sex should play any sport traditionally associated with the opposite sex. As Delaney and Madigan (2015, p. 256) state, “[c]ultural attitudes about the inappropriateness of women playing [certain] sports prevailed up until the [end of the] twentieth century.” We made no effort to talk with female students about setting up girls’ cricket or even softball games. “Little Athletics,” a Saturday-morning club-based activity program in athletics competition, for 6-to-13-years-old, was relatively more enlightened, as it operated girls’ and boys’ events with each type being regarded, at least in theory, as no more or less important than the other. The Australian Football League (AFL) set up its now high-profile and popular national women’s Australian Rules football competition (AFLW) in 2017.

## **Applications in Sport**

These are three-fold. Firstly, adults in charge of children’s sport would do well to reflect upon why we organized our children-controlled matches. They were an act of subversion against what we felt were adult-controlled teams which favored certain students over others in a way which reified teachers’ and coaches’ prior assessments of relative talent. Alex Raine and I were unhappy, perhaps even bitter, that we had been placed in the third-best team out of four in official primary-school cricket as we felt that we were better than that. Delaney and Madigan (2015, p. 162) put forward some ideal characteristics of coaches as follows: “they must think before speaking, be clear communicators, speak with clarity, be consistent yet flexible, and learn to establish a connection to all team members.” None of these things are wrong, but my own list would emphasize three different factors: creating or contributing towards a warm atmosphere around the club; spotting and encouraging latent and hidden talents; and implementing leadership and captaincy training.

Secondly, it would be fascinating to read of other children-controlled sporting ventures and how children used these ventures, featuring perhaps adults on the margins, to empower themselves and other students and resist adult-control of their activities and adult-imposed hierarchies. Thirdly, if children organized matches in response to this article, or adult readers encouraged children to do the same, then we would believe that our matches had lasting impact beyond the direct participants and the Perth suburbia of our era.

## **Conclusion**



The 1980s was a socially conservative time with little interest in the “agency” of young children. On the contrary, children were expected to be traditional and adhere to common social norms. There may be some questions raised relating to my use of the word “empowered” in the context of children and sport. Firstly, “Empowered to do what?” At that time, children generally did not organize their own games and play them to the best of their abilities and with a sense of ethics outside of school or at least not with the level of planning, structure, and professionalism which we demonstrated. A second question, “empowered by whom?”, suggests that children are only “allowed” agency, within certain limits, when we were actually acting independently by ourselves, especially the two captains. However, indirectly, we were also empowered by the school-teachers and school-culture that also restrained and categorized us. As noted, our empowerment was also enriched by Packer’s WSC, which showed us that anything was possible and that we should have a clear plan, start small, and persevere with humility.

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**Table 1 – Complete scoresheets, first match of first series, 1979/80**  
**Panel A - Erskine's team, first innings**

|              |                        |           |
|--------------|------------------------|-----------|
| Painter      | Caught, Bowled Denton  | 4         |
| Bradbury     | Bowled Patel           | 0         |
| McGowan      | Bowled Patel           | 2         |
| Erskine      | Bowled Haythornthwaite | 0         |
| Lever        | Bowled Haythornthwaite | 9         |
| Renfrew      | Caught, Bowled Denton  | 3         |
| Van Gelder   | Bowled Haythornthwaite | 7         |
| McKenzie     | Caught, Bowled Allan   | 2         |
| Lockwood     | Not Out                | 2         |
| Sundries     | (3b, 5w)               | 8         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>All Out</b>         | <b>37</b> |

**Panel B - Jamieson's team, first innings**

|                 |                           |           |
|-----------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Randall         | Bowled Renfrew            | 0         |
| Allan           | Bowled Painter            | 33        |
| Haythornthwaite | Caught, Bowled Painter    | 5         |
| Patel           | Bowled Painter            | 8         |
| Jamieson        | Bowled Painter            | 8         |
| (author)        | Run Out                   | 21        |
| Denton          | Bowled Painter            | 0         |
| Raine           | Bowled Erskine            | 2         |
| Barker          | Caught and Bowled McGowan | 0         |
| Graburn         | Not Out                   | 5         |
| Gillett         | Caught and Bowled Erskine | 0         |
| Allan (2)       |                           |           |
| Sundries        | (9b, 3w, 1nb)             | 13        |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>All Out</b>            | <b>95</b> |

**Panel C - Jamieson's team, second innings**

|                   |                                |           |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Randall           | Bowled Renfrew                 | 2         |
| Allan             | Caught McGowan, Bowled Painter | 27        |
| Patel             | Bowled Renfrew                 | 20        |
| Denton            | Bowled Painter                 | 0         |
| Gillett           | Caught, Bowled Painter         | 0         |
| Haythornthwaite   | Caught, Bowled McGowan         | 2         |
| Raine             | Bowled Van Gelder              | 1         |
| Barker            | Retired                        | 12        |
| Graburn           | Bowled Painter                 | 0         |
| Randall (2)       | Bowled Painter                 | 2         |
| Jamieson (author) | Not Out                        | 0         |
| Sundries          | (14b, 2w, 1nb)                 | 17        |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>All Out</b>                 | <b>83</b> |

**Panel D – Erskine's team, second innings**

|              |                       |           |
|--------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| Painter      | Caught, Bowled Patel  | 3         |
| McGowan      | Run Out               | 22        |
| Lever        | Caught, Bowled Denton | 13        |
| McKenzie     | Caught, Bowled Denton | 0         |
| Van Gelder   | Retired hurt          | 7         |
| Renfrew      | Caught, Bowled Allan  | 0         |
| Erskine      | Bowled Denton         | 2         |
| Lockwood     | Bowled Jamieson       | 0         |
| Van Gelder   | L.B.W. Raine          | 2         |
| Erskine (2)  | Not Out               | 1         |
| Bradbury     | Did Not Bat           |           |
| Sundries     | (17b, 1lb, 1w, 3nb)   | 22        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>All Out</b>        | <b>72</b> |

Result: Jamieson's team won by 69 runs.

Umpires: A. Bennett, Dr. Haythornthwaite, and A. Patel.